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261130Z Apr 00

CONFIDENTIAL PTQ4009

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ACTION AF-00

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| INFO | LOG-00 | NP-00 | AID-00 | ACQ-00 | CIAE-00 | SRPP-00 | DS-00 |
| | EUR-01 | VC-01 | H-01 | TEDE-00 | INR-00 | L-00 | AC-01 |
| | NEA-00 | NSAE-00 | OMB-01 | OPIC-01 | PA-00 | PM-00 | PRS-00 |
| | ACE-00 | P-00 | SP-00 | USIE-00 | SA-00 | PMB-00 | DSCC-00 |
| | DRL-02 | G-00 | NFAT-00 | SAS-00 | /008W | | |

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FM AMEMBASSY HARARE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5859
INFO NSC WASHDC
WHITE HOUSE WASHDC
SECDEF WASHINGTON DC
DEPTTREAS WASHDC
SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 HARARE 002230

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR AF A/S SUSAN E. RICE, PDAS POWELL,
DAS SCHNEIDMAN, AF/S DIRECTOR RENDER, DESK OFFICER
GURNEY, SA/INS FOR STEVE KRAFT
NSC FOR SENIOR DIRECTOR GAYLE SMITH
DEPT ALSO PLEASE PASS AID

E.O. 12958: DECL: 4/26/10

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SUBJECT: GERMAN AMBASSADOR ON MUGABE'S STRATEGY
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REF: HARARE 2222

CLASSIFIED BY AMBASSADOR MCDONALD FOR 1.5 (B), (D)

1. (C) SUMMARY. IN AN APRIL 24 MEETING WITH
AMBASSADOR MCDONALD, GERMAN AMBASSADOR FRITZ FLIMM
PASSED INFORMATION ABOUT AN ONGOING FARM OCCUPATION
THAT HAD SEEN UPWARDS OF A THOUSAND SO-CALLED "WAR
VETERANS" THREATEN A GERMAN NATIONAL AND OTHER FARM
RESIDENTS WHILE OCCUPYING A LARGE: COMMERCIAL FARM
NEAR HARARE. FLIMM THOUGHT IT DEBATABLE WHETHER
PRESIDENT MUGABE WANTS A SOLUTION TO THE LAND
CRISIS, SINCE IT APPEARS TO BE HIS POLITICAL
CAMPAIGN THEME FOR THE UPCOMING PARLIAMENTARY
ELECTION. IN KEEPING WITH THIS, HE SUSPECTED THE
UPCOMING CONFERENCE IN LONDON MAY BE DESIGNED TO
FAIL. HE ALSO THOUGHT THE EU WOULD OFFER TO SEND
ELECTION OBSERVERS, BUT THE FINAL DECISION WILL
REST WITH THE GOZ WHEN IT CHOOSES WHETHER OR NOT TO
ACCEPT THE OFFER. END SUMMARY.

2. (C) AMBASSADOR FLIMM CALLED C)N AMBASSADOR
MCDONALD TO PASS ALONG INFORMATIC)N ON AN ONGOING
FARM OCCUPATION NEAR HARARE THAT, BECAUSE THE FARM
MANAGER WAS BEING HELD AGAINST HJ-S WILL, WAS
GARNERING SIGNIFICANT MEDIA ATTENTION. HE ALSO
SOUGHT A READOUT ON THE RECENT S/E WOLPE VISIT.
DCM AND TDY POLOFF (NOTETAKER) ALSO ATTENDED.

3. (C) FLIMM HAD BEEN IN DIRECT CONTACT WITH THE
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FARM MANAGER DURING THE OCCUPATION BECAUSE THE
OWNER IS A GERMAN NATIONAL. HE SAID THE SITUATION
ON THE 20,000 HECTARE FARM (THE LARGEST TOBACCO
FARM IN THE COUNTRY) HAD DEVELOPED ON THE MORNING
OF APRIL 23, WHEN THE RESIDENT MANAGER HAD CALLED
FOR ASSISTANCE WHEN HE SAW TWO COLUMNS OF FARM
OCCUPIERS APPROACHING THE MAIN PROPERTY. THEY WERE
USING EQUIPMENT THEY HAD STOLEN FROM NEARBY
OCCUPIED FARMS AS TRANSPORTATION. AT THE HEIGHT OF
THE OCCUPATION, ABOUT 1,000 SO-CALLED WAR VETERANS
WERE PRESENT.

4. (C) THE FARM MANAGER ESTIMATED THAT ABOUT HALF
OF THE OCCUPIERS WERE NOT PARTICIPATING
VOLUNTARILY. HE ALSO THOUGHT THAT MOST OF THEM
WERE NOT FROM THE AREA AROUND THE FARM, BUT HAD
INSTEAD COME FROM THE NORTHERN REGION OF ZIMBABWE.

5. (C) AMBASSADOR FLIMM AND THE FARM MANAGER HAD
BEEN CONFIDENT THE OCCUPATION WOULD NOT BE A MAJOR
WORRY BECAUSE THE AMBASSADOR HAD PREVIOUS

ASSURANCES FROM MASHONALAND CENTRAL PROVINCIAL GOVERNOR AND ZANU-PF HEAVYWEIGHT BORDER GEZI THAT IT WOULD BE PEACEFUL. WHEN THE OCCUPATION TURNED VIOLENT AND THE MANAGER AND OTHER FARM RESIDENTS WERE BEING THREATENED, AMBASSADOR FLIMM HAD BEEN ABLE TO BRING THE SITUATION UNDER CONTROL BY AGAIN APPEALING TO GEZI. IN THE END, THE WAR VETS LEFT A TOKEN HANDFUL OF OCCUPIERS ON THE FARM AND HAD TAKEN ADDITIONAL FARM EQUIPMENT TO TRANSPORT THEMSELVES TO OTHER PROPERTIES IN THE AREA.

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16. (C) REFLECTING ON THIS OCCUPATION AND THE RECENT COURSE OF EVENTS NATIONWIDE, FLIMM OPINED THAT IT IS HIGHLY DEBATABLE WHETHER PRESIDENT MUGABE ACTUALLY WANTS A RESOLUTION TO THE LAND OCCUPATION CRISIS. FLIMM SEES THE OCCUPATIONS, THE ATTENDANT PUBLICITY, THE INTIMIDATION OF RURAL VOTERS, AND MUGABE'S ABILITY TO PROJECT A TOUGH PUBLIC IMAGE, AS ALL PART OF A PACKAGE THAT MUGABE, FOR NOW AT LEAST, FINDS TO HIS LIKING. IN ESSENCE, THE CRISIS HAS BEEN AN ELECTION PLOY BY MUGABE.

17. (C) FLIMM THOUGHT IT LIKELY THAT MUGABE INTENDS FOR THE COMING LONDON CONSULTATIONS BETWEEN A ZIMBABWEAN MINISTERIAL TROIKA AND BRITAIN TO FAIL. AS FLIMM SEES IT, A WASHOUT AT THE LONDON CONFERENCE GIVES MUGABE TWO THINGS: HE CAN CONTINUE TO PORTRAY THE BRITISH AS INTRANSIGENT, AND HE KEEPS THE FARM OCCUPIERS, WITH THEIR VALUABLE POLITICAL MUSCLE, ON THE FARMS WHERE THEY CAN HELP DELIVER ZANU-PF VOTES. IN SHORT, FLIMM THINKS MUGABE WANTS TO KEEP UP THE PRESSURE WITH THE OBJECTIVE OF SMASHING HIS MAIN OPPOSITION PARTY,

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5860
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 HARARE 002230

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DEPARTMENT FOR AF A/S SUSAN E. RICE, PDAS POWELL,
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THE MOVEMENT FOR DEMOCRATIC CHANGE (MDC).

18. (C) FLIMM ALSO INFORMED THE AMBASSADOR THAT THE EU IS IN FAVOR OF SENDING OBSERVERS FOR THE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION. THE EU WILL MAKE THE OFFER TO THE GOZ, WHICH WILL THEN HAVE THE FINAL DECISION ON WHETHER OR NOT TO ACCEPT THE OBSERVERS.

19. (C) FLIMM SOUGHT INFORMATION FROM THE AMBASSADOR ABOUT THE RECENT SERIES OF MEETINGS BETWEEN THE AMBASSADOR, S/E WOLPE, AND GOZ OFFICIALS INCLUDING MUGABE. THE AMBASSADOR PROVIDED A READOUT OF THE MEETINGS HE HAD PARTICIPATED IN ALONG THE LINES OF REFTEL.

COMMENT

110. (C) WE BELIEVE THAT AT THIS TIME, MUGABE HAS LITTLE REAL INTEREST IN SOLVING THE LAND CRISIS.

IT IS, AT BOTTOM, A POLITICAL MOVE HE HAS
ACQUIESCED IN IF NOT DESIGNED. T'HE ABILITY OF
GOVERNOR GEZI TO TURN OFF VIOLENCE APPARENTLY AT
WILL IS ANOTHER SIGN, IF ONE WERE NEEDED, THAT THE
GOVERNMENT CAN INDEED CONTROL THE COURSE OF EVENTS
HERE WHEN IT SO DESIRES. MOREOVER, THE PEOPLE
SUFFERING THE HARD KNOCKS ARE MUGABE'S POLITICAL
OPPONENTS.

11. (C) IT ALSO IS CONSISTENT WITH ALL WE HAVE
SEEN THAT MUGABE WISHES FOR THE LONDON CONFERENCE
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WITH BRITAIN TO FAIL. SUCCESS WOULD BRING HIM
INTERNATIONAL APPROBATION, BUT WOULD STYMIE HIM IN
THE ONE CLEAR COURSE HE HAS CHARTED IN TRYING TO
APPEAL TO THE ZIMBABWEAN VOTER--AND AT THE MOMENT
POLITICAL SURVIVAL OUTWEIGHS ALL OTHER CONCERNS FOR
MUGABE. IF THE TALKS DO NOT SUCCEED, HE CAN
CONTINUE TO BLAME OTHERS FOR HIS COUNTRY'S
PROBLEMS, RAIL AGAINST THE COLONIAL PAST, AND KEEP
THE POTENTIALLY EXPLOSIVE WAR VETERANS OCCUPIED
WITH A TASK THEY APPARENTLY FIND TO THEIR LIKING.
IN THE EVENT THE TALKS DO PRODUCE SOME SETTLEMENT,
MUGABE WILL CROW ABOUT HIS SUCCESS, BUT WE STILL
WOULD NOT EXPECT TO SEE RAPID PROGRESS ON THE
GROUND TOWARD PACIFYING THE FARM OCCUPIERS, A MOVE
THAT WOULD REQUIRE HIM TO THINK OF A NEW ELECTION
STRATEGY. END COMMENT.
MCDONALD

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